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INAUGURAL ADDRESS
OF
VICE PRESIDENT
THOMAS R. MARSHALL



ADDRESS OF THE
VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

DELIVERED AT THE INAUGURAL CEREMONIES
HELD IN THE SENATE OF THE
UNITED STATES ON

MARCH 5, 1917



17-20201

WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
1917

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 4.

By Mr. FLETCHER.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

March 6, 1917.

Resolved, That the address of the Vice President, delivered March 5, 1917, be printed as a Senate document, and that 10,000 additional copies be printed for the use of the Senate document room.

Attest:

JAMES M. BAKER,
Secretary.

J. of D.
MAY 25 1917

ADDRESS.

SENATORS: Custom calls for the utterance of a few words upon this occasion; otherwise, I would gladly remain silent. It may not be inappropriate to express my gratitude for the little nameless, unnumbered, and oftentimes unremembered acts of courtesy and charity shown to me by the Members of this body during the last four years; to express my regret over the vanishing faces of those who are leaving and to welcome those who in a few moments are to become our coworkers in the cause of constitutional freedom.

Everywhere in America are clamant and strident voices proclaiming the essential elements of patriotism. He who seeks out of them all to select one clear note of love for country may fail. I conceive it to be far more important to examine myself than to cross-examine another. May I make bold to insert in the Record some elements of the creed which I have adopted in this period of retrospection and introspection? It does not embrace what I know but holds part of what I believe.

I have faith that this Government of ours was divinely ordained to disclose whether men are by nature fitted or can by education be made fit for self-government; to teach Jew and Greek, bondman and free, alike, the essential equality of all men before the law and to be tender and true to humanity everywhere and under all circumstances; to reveal that service is the highest reward of life. I can not believe otherwise when I read the words and recall the sacrifices of the fathers. If ours is not the golden rule of government, then Washington wrought and Lincoln died in vain.

I believe that the world, now advancing and now retreating, is nevertheless moving forward to a far-off divine event wherein the tongues of Babel will again be blended in the language of a common brotherhood; and I believe that I can reach the highest ideal of my tradition and my lineage as an American—as a man, as a citizen, and as a public official—when I judge my fellow men without malice and with charity, when I worry more about my own motives and conduct and less about the motives and conduct of others. The time I am liable to be wholly wrong is when I know that I am absolutely right. In an individualistic Republic I am the unit of patriotism,

and if I keep myself keyed in unison with the music of the Union my fellow men will catch the note and fall into time and step.

I believe there is no finer form of government than the one under which we live, and that I ought to be willing to live or to die, as God decrees, that it may not perish from off the earth through treachery within or through assault from without; and I believe that though my first right is to be a partisan, my first duty, when the only principles on which free government can rest are being strained, is to be a patriot and to follow in a wilderness of words that clear call which bids me guard and defend the ark of our national covenant.



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